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ABSTRACT

The means for ethnic language retention (ELRET) should be built into bilingual education programs in the United States. Currently there are very few programs designed to help a foreign speaker maintain his mother-tongue ability as he learns a new language. Materials designed in this field should take advantage of the concept of "domain stability," i.e., the theory that an ethnic language will be retained as long as it continues to be the preferred language within definite areas of activity. Instructional materials should induce speakers to stabilize certain domains in which the ethnic language would be used in their daily lives. This report discusses research conducted in this field and programs and materials that are available. (VM)

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AFTER CHILDHOOD, THEN WHAT?
AN OVERVIEW OF ETHNIC LANGUAGE RETENTION (ELRET) PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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AFTER CHILDHOOD, THEN WHAT?

AN OVERVIEW OF ETHNIC LANGUAGE RETENTION (ELRET)

PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

The recent development of bilingual education programs for those groups whose native language is other than English has lent a new interest to the concept of ethnic language retention. The question has been raised whether bilingual education (i.e., education through the medium of English together with some other language) is primarily a transitional device to help out children of our ethnic minorities until they become fluent in English, or whether one aim is the retention of the vernacular even after (and in a sense independent from) the acquisition of fluency in English.

If the Bilingual Education Act is intended to conserve our language resources, then measures for the retention of the vernacular, or ethnic language, should be built into our bilingual programs. And measures should be taken not only within schools where formal bilingual programs are in progress, but in all schools having ethnic speakers, and particularly in those schools where foreign languages are offered which are actually the ethnic languages of a number of the students. Thus time will not be wasted in teaching students things which they already know, and the ethnic speakers will make a very real contribution by making the language come alive for monolingual students interested in acquiring it.

For much of our foreign language teaching is ethnic oriented. It is not by accident that Spanish has been widely taught in the

Southwest, that French is popular in New England and Louisiana, or that Portuguese is taught in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Efforts directed towards ethnic language retention are certainly not new in the United States (most of our immigrant groups have formed organizations for this purpose), nor for that matter is bilingual education. German-English bilingual schools,both public and private, flourished during the nineteenth century and up until the First World War. Spanish and French were also used in bilingual schools in New Mexico and Louisiana respectively. Yet during the period after the First World War public school bilingual education ceased completely and the idea of any effort towards public school assistance in programs designed to enhance ethnic language retention was so completely absent from the national scene that Brault could claim in 1962 that his "Bowdoin Institutes" (the first of which took place in 1961) sponsored by the National Defense Education Act in order to train teachers and prepare materials for teaching French to ethnic speakers, "marked the first time in history that an ethnic group was accorded federal support in its struggle to preserve its linguistic heritage."[1] The rebirth of bilingual education in our time seems to have taken place in 1963 at the Coral Way School in Miami in response to the needs of Cuban refugees of that area, though the program has been so successful that monolingual speakers of English have been included and have benefitted from it. Foreign language instruction in the United States has, however, for the most part, ignored the needs of the ethnic speaker, and with the exception of a few materials to be mentioned later

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[1]Gerald J. Brault, "The Special NDEA Institute at Bowdoin College for French Teachers of Canadian Descent," PMLA, LXXVII (September, 1962), p. 1.

on, there is nothing commercially available for teaching ethnic languages, and there is no organized effort or formalized structure within which the teaching of ethnic languages can be planned and discussed.

Considering the fact that in the United States there may be nearly 20,000,000 people with some knowledge of an ethnic language,[2] this seems incredible, particularly since our federal government evidenced its belief that people with a knowledge of a foreign language constitute a valuable resource by making foreign language study eligible for support under NDEA. In regard to these NDEA projects, A. Bruce Gaarder of the United States Office of Education has stated that "The Federal Government encourages a multi-million dollar expenditure annually for language development (in both the 'common' and 'neglected' languages) but no part of the effort is directed specifically to the further development of those same languages in the more than one in ten Americans who already have a measure of native competence in them,"[3] (Brault's "Bowdoin Institutes" constituting a unique exception). It is true that Gaarder made this statement before the passage of the Bilingual Education Act and some bilingual programs have attempted to remedy this anomaly. However, more recent studies by Gaarder have been highly critical of many bilingual programs precisely because of inadequate attention given

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[2]Fishman's estimate is that in 1960 approximately nineteen million people in the United States possessed a non-English mother tongue. See Joshua A. Fishman, "The Status and Prospects of Bilingualism in the United States," The Modern Language Journal, XLIX (March, 1965), p. 143.

[3]A. Bruce Gaarder, "Teaching the Bilingual Child: Research, Development, and Policy," The Modern Language Journal, XLIX (March, 1965), p. 166.

to the ethnic language. In a recent essay on the subject, he points out that in the first seventy-six bilingual schooling projects supported by grants under the Bilingual Schooling Act, there appears to be "such inadequate attention--time, resources, and understanding--to the other tongue, as compared to the attention paid to English that, on the whole, the concept of bilingual education represented by these plans of operation seems to be something less than the legislation and its advocates intended."[4] Gaarder also implies that foreign language teachers should be much more involved in bilingual education than they are by mentioning, apparently as an exception, one program in which this involvement does occur: "Milwaukee sees the importance of uniting its bilingual schooling project with the efforts of its regular foreign language teachers at the high school level, and will offer a history and culture course for both groups of students together."[5]

Long a staunch advocate of ethnic language retention, Gaarder has insisted that bilingual education should be something more than simply a transitional device to enable low income groups to become more acculturated. Another outstanding scholar whose work has been primarily in support of ELRET is Joshua Fishman, who has made extensive studies of the linguistic resources of our country, and the tendency towards maintenance or shift among the various ethnic groups. Major projects which Fishman has directed for the Research Section of the United States Office of Education have produced reports such as Language Loyalty in the United

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[4]A. Bruce Gaarder, "The First Seventy-Six Bilingual Education Projects," Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics, No. 23, ed. James E. Alatis (Georgetown University, 1970), p. 163.

[5]Ibid., p. 173.

States and, more recently, Bilingualism in the Barrio, which deals specifically with linguistic habits of Puerto Rican families living in the New York City area.[6] Some relevant points from this study will be mentioned later. In order to make the climate for ethnic languages more favorable, Fishman suggests the establishment of a "'Commission on Biculturism (or Bilingualism) in American Life' with national, regional and local subdivisions." He also recommends financial and other aid to language maintenance organizations, and of more immediate interest, the "preparation of special teaching materials for the bilingual child" and the "granting of credit for out-of-school language mastery."[7]

The preparation of special teaching materials will be discussed in detail. Granting credit for out-of-school language mastery, however, is also extremely important because of the way our educational system is "credit point" and "basic requirement" oriented. The one way that we as educators can show ethnic speakers that we feel it important that they have kept up their language is by giving credit for competence and not simply for patience. Let us hope that more high schools and colleges will allow competent ethnic speakers to receive credit through proficiency examinations, and that College Board will extend its CLEP (College Level Examination Program) to include languages other than English.

In mentioning scholarly work in ELRET, the name of Einar Haugen should certainly not be passed over. Haugen's The Norwegian Language in

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[6]The first of these was published by Mouton & Company in The Hague in 1966. The second is supposedly available from the Bureau of Research of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Contract No. OEC-1-062817-0297), though copies are extremely difficult to obtain. Articles from Bilingualism in the Barrio appear in The Modern Language Journal, LIII, No. 3 (March , 1969) and LIII, No. 4 (April, 1969).

[7]Joshua A. Fishman, "The Status and Prospects of Bilingualism in the United States," The Modern Language Journal, XLIX (March, 1965), p. 153.

America provides a somewhat heart-rendering account of how a once vigorous ethnic language has succumbed to external and internal erosion.[8] He has also produced materials for teaching Norwegian. Other scholars whose works are pertinent include Uriel Weinreich, whose Languages in Contact provides a framework for analyzing types of interference.[9] And the Journal of Social Issues devotes its April, 1967 issue to "Problems of Bilingualism" where, in addition to articles by Gaarder and Fishman, there are others by Susan Ervin-Tripp, John J. Gumperz, Dell Hymes, Heinz Kloss, Wallace Lambert and John Macnamara. Lambert's research in particlar has very positive implications for bilingual education and ethnic language retention programs. His experiments tend to show that the bilingual is less bound by rigid norms of a particular group and "may well start life with the enormous advantage of having a more open, receptive mind about himself and other people."[10] Gaarder refers to the Peal-Lambert study of bilingual ten-year-olds in Montreal which gives evidence that "if the children are equally well educated in both languages, i.e., 'balanced' bilinguals, they are superior in both verbal and non-verbal intelligence to monolinguals."[11] This should give the ethnic speaker a powerful reason for maintaining his bilingual ability independent of the advantages to be derived from the knowledge of a particular language,

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[8]Published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in two volumes, 1953.

[9]Published by Mouton & Company in The Hague in 1967.

[10]Wallace E. Lambert, "A Social Psychology of Bilingualism," The Journal of Social Issues, XXIII (April, 1967), p. 106.

[11]Gaarder, "Teaching the Bilingual Child," p. 173.

although Lambert's experiments should be replicated with language combinations other than French and English.

It is impossible to report here all the findings of scholars which might have implications for ELRET programs. It seems to me, however, that the most important single factor to be gleaned from scholarly research can be stated quite simply and inequivocally, although the implications for teaching will tax the best efforts of material writers and curriculum planners who devote themselves to developing programs for teaching ethnic languages. The factor may be called the "domain stability" concept. That is, an ethnic language will be retained as long as it continues to be the preferred language within certain definite areas of activity. To again quote Fishman, ". . . If a strict domain separation becomes institutionalized such that each language is associated with a number of important but distinct domains, bilingualism can become both universal and stabilized even though an entire population consists of bilinguals interacting with other bilinguals."[12] In my own work with Spanish-speaking groups, I have noticed that the Mexican Americans, or Chicanos, conserve Spanish much better, even after generations of living in the United States, than do the " Neo-Ricans" or children of Puerto Rican parents living in New York and in other large urban areas of the East, because the Neo-Ricans tend to prefer English in all domains and speak Spanish only to older people. A questionnaire which a number of Neo-Rican students filled out for me indicated a preference for use of English among those of their own age group for all purposes. Cooper and Greenfield in

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[12]As quoted by Gaarder, Ibid., p. 172.

examining a group of Puerto Rican background living in Jersey City conclude that "the finding that young people, in speaking among themselves, use English more often than Spanish in all domains, including family, suggests that bilingualism in the community under study is characterized by language shift."[13]

The problem, then, for those of us who write materials and plan programs designed to enhance ethnic language retention is whether these materials can be so contrived that they will induce ethnic speakers to stabilize certain domains in which the ethnic language will be used in their daily lives, particularly for groups like the "Neo-Ricans" for whom such domain stability does not appear to exist at the present time. The problem is not a simple one--it will, as I have said, tax our best efforts--yet it is quite possible that there is a good bit that we can do, particularly since our efforts now seem to go hand in hand with the designs of youth organizations among Spanish-speaking groups whose purposes, according to Gaarder, are to acquire an education and to reaffirm their ethnicity.[14] Certain clues as to how to approach the problem may be gathered from Bilingualism in the Barrio in which it is pointed out that Spanish does have an important role in the lives of the youth of Puerto Rican background living in the New York area. For example, it is imperative that a boy speak Spanish when he is first introduced to his girl friend's parents--that is, when he is requesting permission to be

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[13]Robert L. Cooper and Lawrence Greenfield, "Language Use in a Bilingual Community," The Modern Language Journal, LIII (March, 1969), p. 172.

[14]A. Bruce Gaarder, "Teaching Spanish in School and College to Native Speakers of Spanish," (unpublished draft of report commissioned by the Executive Council of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, 1971), p. 8.

her formal novio.[15] Fishman points out that boys whose command of Spanish is poor look forward to this moment with dread and we can certainly imagine they would be grateful for some pointers as to how to handle the situation. Sample dialogs can be built in to materials, and hopefully, the boy's future suegro will not discuss topics on which he is tongue-tied. Also, Spanish continues to be the language of the piropo. The ingeniously worded little complement which the admiring male makes to female beauty simply would not come off in English. It has a tradition of its own which depends on Spanish. And Fishman points out that the ability to invent clever piropos is highly valued.[16]

ELRET materials should, in short, take advantage of community and family relationships and should serve to bring the school and the community closer together. In complementation of Fishman's points, mentioned earlier, Gaarder insists that there should be:

1. new, strong links between what the schools do and what the community is and wants;

2. an end to the attitude of condescension on the part of foreign language teachers toward the language of the folk bilinguals.[17]

Regarding the first point, we might add that positive, understanding efforts should be made to sell the community on the ELRET concept (are they aware, for example, of the results of Lambert's studies on the correlation of bilingualism and intelligence?). Parents who desire that their children keep up the ethnic language often insist that it be spoken in the home. Lacking this, it can be suggested (and such suggestions can

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[15] Joshua A. Fishman, et al., Bilingualism in the Barrio, I, p. 67.

[16] Ibid., I, p. 67.

[17] A. Bruce Gaarder, personal letter, January 19, 1971.

be built in to the material) that the ethnic language should at least be conserved in certain situations. A favorite is at the dinner table. If this is accepted good-naturedly, it becomes a kind of a game in which the person who accidentally utters a word in English must pay a fine or do some other type of penance. Additional suggestions related to activities where the ethnic language might be used could involve club meetings, summer camps, and ethnic festivals. The important thing is to have a certain group of activities which will always be carried out in the ethnic language and on which its retention will be anchored. This does not mean that the ethnic language need always be limited to these activities, nor does it even mean, in my opinion, that there is anything wrong with mixing languages in certain domains as long as competence in both English and the ethnic language is assured by the existence of domains in which a single language must be used exclusively. Gaarder is not happy about mixing languages, but I feel that his exhortation that "every effort be made to avoid this mixing of Spanish and English"[18] is a bit too severe, having found in my own personal experience that one of the most enjoyable things about being bilingual is having two languages at my disposal instead of one and in being able to use either of them when in conversation with other bilinguals. It is fascinating to reflect on why certain things are said in one language and not the other. Being able to mix languages is really a bonus for being bilingual.

Regarding the second point, since it seems to be pretty much assumed that outside of formal bilingual programs, and particularly at the secondary level, ELRET efforts will fall to the foreign language

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[18]Gaarder, "Teaching Spanish in School and College to Native Speakers of Spanish," p. 16.

teacher, the question arises as to what special training such a teacher needs--special courses in methodology of teaching an ethnic language, social problems of minority groups, or possibly more work in applied linguistics with special reference to dialectology? It is crucial that the teacher take a positive attitude toward the ethnic group and its linguistic idiosincracies. For if domain stability is a central concept to ELRET, then a corollary to this is that procedures for teaching ethnic speakers should certainly not imperil domains in which the ethnic language is already used, however imperfectly. In regard to this, Gaarder expresses the viewpoints of the AATSP Committee in the following manner:

> The dialect speaker must be accepted wholeheartedly as and where he is and must never be censured or subjected to pressure simply because he speaks the dialect. The position to be taken is that each style of speaking, each dialect, is appropriate to certain situations, and that the pupil, eventually, is to learn a world standard in order to increase his repertory of speech styles and so increase his versatility and power.[19]

In other words, the ethnic speaker should learn the standard language. But deviant forms should be considered matters of interest rather than matters of scorn.

In making a survey of materials now available, we find very little specifically designed for teaching ethnic speakers in the United States--either <u>in</u> their language or <u>about</u> their language. Bilingual programs often seek to make use of materials produced in other countries where the language is native. Gaarder, however, laments the fact that not enough attention is given to the development and procurement of materials in the ethnic language, and points out that instead, bilingual teachers "are expected in most of the projects to create or assist in

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[19] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 4.

the creation of teaching materials in the non-English tongue."[20] Since these teachers are usually untrained in writing materials in any language, the results can be disastrous.

What is being done is mainly at the primary level. The Spanish Curricula Development Center, located in Miami Beach, has been set up as part of a major effort of the Bilingual Programs Branch of the Office of Education, "for the purpose of creating primary bloc Spanish curricula to support Spanish-English bilingual education programs." The Center plans to develop "48 multidisciplinary, multimedia Spanish Curricula kits" for use in the first three grades. In addition to focusing on the language itself, these will include "strands" in social science, fine arts, science, and mathematics.[21] Final completion of these materials is scheduled for August 1974, and they will be available not only to formal bilingual programs, but also "to interested school systems with relevant pupil populations."[22] Ralph Robinett, the director of this Center, had previously worked as director of the Michigan Migrant Primary Interdisciplinary Project which developed special curricula for the children of migrant workers in the state of Michigan--The Michigan Oral Language Series. This included a "Spanish Guide" for use at the kindergarten level.

I might add here that it was my own privilege to be contracted by the Philadelphia Public School System to write ELRET materials in

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[20]Gaarder, "The First Seventy-Six Bilingual Education Projects," p. 167.

[21]Ralph F. Robinett, "The Spanish Curricula Development Center," The National Elementary Principal, I (November, 1970), p. 62.

[22]Ibid., p. 63.

Spanish for the 10-12 grade level. I have not yet received a formal criticism of these materials, though I have been promised one and look forward to it with great interest.

Before going further into the matter of specialized materials for ethnic speakers at the secondary level, it might be convenient first to discuss characteristics of the target groups and typical problems in their language usage. It is not easy to make sharp cut-off points, of course; ethnic speakers differ in their linguistic abilities and many with ethnic surnames may have little or no knowledge of the language. Gaarder lists as minimal qualifications for participation in a program designed for ethnic speakers (in this case, Spanish), "the ability to understand ordinary conversation in the dialect of his parents and their peers plus the ability to follow simple instructions given in Spanish."[23] My comments at this point will be mainly limited to the group I have directly studied--the "Neo-Rican" college freshmen, children of Puerto Rican parents who have been reared and educated in the United States, usually in New York City or other large urban areas for whom Spanish is the language spoken in the home but not at school. (They did not have the advantage of bilingual education programs.) In their use of and attitudes toward Spanish, this group evidences the following characteristics:

1. They control the mechanics of the spoken language quite well (their vocabulary is limited to terms that are common in everyday use);

2. However, they usually prefer to use English among themselves (with an occasional Spanish word or expression thrown in) though most state they would like to better their command of Spanish;

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[23]Gaarder, "Teaching Spanish in School and College to Native Speakers of Spanish," p. 3.

3. Their phonetic habits are characteristically Puerto Rican. That is, there is little evidence of deterioration through contact with English;

4. They can read when required to do so, though they do so slowly and are somewhat hampered by lack of vocabulary.

5. Their spelling of Spanish is very deficient. It is influenced by their pronunciation habits and by English spelling in the case of cognates. They usually refuse to use written accent marks;

6. They are aware of their Puerto Rican heritage, but do not feel they belong to Puerto Rico. As one once said, they prefer to associate "with people like me--Puerto Ricans who come from the United States or New York."

While different groups of ethnic speakers may differ somewhat in regard to some of these points (some, hopefully, will show more evidence of domain stability in the ethnic language), one feature which I feel they all have in common is the lack of ability in reading and writing, which requires special training, as opposed to the development of oral facility, which would come naturally from the environment. This fact has important implications for materials and procedures. Some pronunciation therapy may of course be needed, but basically ELRET materials should not be audio-lingually oriented.

The foreign language teacher at the secondary level, not involved in formal bilingual programs, and seeking guidance and specialized materials for teaching ethnic speakers, will find that such materials are almost nonexistent. A pioneering effort in this area was produced under the direction of Gerald J. Brault during his Bowdoin Institutes, already mentioned, whose purpose was the "formation and professional perfection of our Franco-American French teachers at the secondary level."[24]

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[24]Gerald J. Brault, Livret du Professeur de Francais Franco-Americain (Brunswick, 1962), p. 1.

However, the text, entitled Cours de Langue Francaise destiné aux Jeunes Franco-Americains is not commercially available and is quite difficult to obtain. According to Elphege Roy, founder of the Franco-American Teachers Association, it is used in the largest public high school in Manchester, New Hampshire, and "in a few schools in New England."[25]

Since this is the pioneering effort in the ELRET field, some comments seem appropriate. According to the author, it is designed to be used by students who have already had "six or seven years of French at the Franco-American parochial school," who understand spoken French and who can read a passage of medium difficulty.[26] It consists of thirty units whose format includes a short article, a dialog, an explanation of difficult vocabulary items, pronunciation exercises to correct typical Franco-American or French Canadian errors, oral exercises of the pattern practice type, and translation exercises to and from French. The pattern practice component occasionally attempts to correct errors which are typical in Franco-American although it may simply introduce a verb form or structural feature, with no reference to existing usage. The articles and dialogs involve points of social and historical interest to Franco Americans and treat both French Canadian and French culture. For one who has not actually used the book in question or taught the target group, it is difficult to make a just criticism. Offhand, it seems to resemble a text for teaching French as a foreign language too much, and

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[25]Elphege Roy, personal letter, November 8, 1969. Information regarding the text can be obtained from Mr. Roy at 103 Oak Street, Manchester, New Hampshire--03104.

[26]Gerald J. Brault, Cours de Lanuge Francaise destiné aux Jeunes Franco-Americains (Manchester, 1965), p. 7.

except for the exercises involving corrections in Franco American usage, a casual glance would lead one to believe that it is exactly that. The extensive use of controlled oral pattern practice so characteristic of the audio-lingual method of foreign language teaching, would seem to be dull and wasteful when dealing with ethnic speakers who already control the basic mechanics of the language, who already understand spoken French and can read passages of medium difficulty.

Independent of bilingual programs established under Title VII, most of the work done in ethnic language retention has been carried out with the Mexican Americans who appear to be somewhat ahead of the rest of the country in the formalization of ELRET efforts. Consequently, the experiences which they are having need to be observed carefully to determine their degree of applicability to other groups. For example, in June 1969 the Texas Education Agency published an unbound book Español Para Alumnos Hispanohablantes to provide guidance to junior and senior high school teachers of the state in setting up special classes for the Spanish speaking. Although this publication includes sample lessons, it is not itself a textbook, is not sold commercially, and is not made available except to teachers. In the section on "Specialized Classes" it is pointed out that "Some school systems in Texas have been following now, for several years, the plan for accelerated classes" for native speakers of Spanish, and that "The Superintendent's Annual Report for 1967-68 shows 120 school systems which provide separate classes for native speakers of Spanish at the secondary level."[27] There is also a section recommending materials which might be used. These include a

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[27]The Texas Education Agency, Español para Alumnos Hispanohablantes (preliminary ed., n.p., 1969), p. 4.

number of textbooks used in Latin America for native speakers of Spanish, a few texts produced for teaching Spanish in the United States (particularly in the literature area), and the only two textbooks published commercially (by National Textbook Company) for teaching an ethnic language in the continental United States--Paulline Baker's Español para los hispanos, and Marie Esman Barker's Español para el bilingüe.[28]

Español para los Hispanos is short and mainly designed to strengthen and correct the student's use of the language at a basic level and the author suggests that it be supplemented with literary texts. There are explanations and exercises designed to teach proper spelling and pronunciation, correct substandard usage, and increase vocabulary, as well as a section on letter writing and on parliamentary terminology.

Marie Esman Barker's text is much more complete. It is divided into twenty-one separate units, each centered about a particular point of linguistic, literary, or cultural interest. The format for each unit usually includes two articles or short stories on the particular topic in question, an explanation of some grammatical point, and a number of exercises involving vocabulary, morphemics, syntax and pronunciation. The book would obviously be very useful at the high school or even at the beginning college level.

However, at this point a word of warning is necessary. Although the titles of these two texts use the general terms hispano and bilingüe, they are so obviously aimed, both culturally and linguistically, at the

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[28] Ibid., p. 159ff.

Mexican American of the Southwest--the "Chicano"--that they are not appropriate for use among other Spanish-speaking groups, such as those of Cuban or Puerto Rican background. The cultural orientation of the articles in Mrs. Barker's text is all towards Mexico and is designed to enhance pride in the Mexican American cultural heritage. From the standpoint of linguistics, while it is true that, for example, Neo-Rican and Chicano Spanish may share certain problem areas because of contact with English, there are also differences derived from corresponding differences in Puerto Rican and Mexican Spanish. In addition the Chicanos, living more in rural isolation and more determined to assert their identity linguistically, have evolved their own caló or Pachuco dialect. Español para los Hispanos, in particular, presents a wealth of pachuquismos and their equivalents in standard Spanish, along with translation exercises involving Pachuco. A sentence such as "Anochi me jambaron mi huacha y todo mi jando" would be incomprehensible to a Neo-Rican.[29]

And so we find that outside of Title VII bilingual programs, almost all formalized ELRET efforts, and the only two commercially available publications, are aimed at the Chicanos. Publishers of educational materials are naturally reluctant to enter a new field unless a demand for the material is supported by a formal curriculum structure. Even within the formal framework of Bilingual Education, it is interesting to note the extent to which the Chicanos are favored. Of the first seventy-six bilingual schooling projects supported by grants under the Bilingual Education Act, fifty-eight are for Mexican Americans.

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[29] Paulline Baker, Español para los Hispanos (Skokie, Illinois, 1968), p. 50.

Sixty-eight of the total are for the Spanish-speaking, nine among these involving Puerto Ricans. It is true that a very few of the bilingual schooling projects which involve Spanish also involve one other language, but even taking this fact into consideration, there are only fourteen of the total seventy-six projects which deal with an ethnic language other than Spanish.[30] The reason for this of course involves the socio-economic status of the Spanish-speaking and the fact that Bilingual Education is aimed at the lowest income groups. Now there is nothing wrong with helping people who are disadvantaged in the socio-economic scale to better themselves by providing them with educational programs more geared to their needs, but if knowledge of another language is really a resource, then efforts should be made to preserve it whether it is found among the lower, middle, or upper classes.

One is amazed to realize, for example, that Italian, the language which accounted for the largest number of non-English speakers according to the census of 1960,[31] and German, which according to one report had the greatest number of speakers as late as 1964,[32] are not even represented in Bilingual Education Programs, and textbooks for teaching Italian and German in the United States make no allowances

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[30]Gaarder, "The First Seventy-Six Bilingual Education Projects," p. 163.

[31]Theodore Andersson, "A New Focus on the Bilingual Child," The Modern Language Journal, XLIX (March, 1965), p. 156.

[32]Theodore Andersson and Mildred Boyer, Bilingual Schooling in the United States (2 vols.; Austin: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1970), II, p. 22, quoting Seigfried H. Muller, The World's Living Languages: Basic Facts of Their Structure, Kinship, Location and Number of Speakers (New York, 1964).

for the large number of ethnic speakers. Andersson states that as far as his own research can ascertain, "no attempt has ever been made throughout the history of Italian immigration to the United States to instruct Italian Americans in the Italian language."[33] Italian is of course taught as a subject in most universities and in a number of high schools, and ethnicity is doubtlessly one reason why students choose to take it.[34] We can only hope that where a number of ethnic speakers are involved, the perceptive and imaginative teacher can improvise materials designed for their particular needs. One serious problem with Italian is dialectal difference. "Standard" Italian differs quite considerably from the home dialect of most Italo-Americans. Andersson points out that most of the Italians living in the East are from the Neapolitan provinces and from Sicily, whereas those living in the West are from North Italy, and that many Italo-Americans "were not even aware of the great cultural heritage associated with the [standard] Italian language and so they showed no desire to preserve it and perpetuate it."[35] An additional problem which Andersson cites is the negative attitude, particularly among the South Italians, toward formal education in general.[36] At this point, needless to say, their attitude is drastically different from that of the Puerto Ricans, who see formal education as a kind of

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[33] Ibid., II, p. 141.

[34] Of the 33,038 total enrollment for Italian in Public secondary schools in the fall of 1968, 6,795 were from New England and 15,610 from the state of New York. See Julia Gibson Kant, "Foreign Language Offerings and Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools, Fall 1968," Foreign Language Annals, III (March, 1970), p. 443.

[35] Andersson and Boyer, II, p. 139.

[36] Ibid., II, p. 140.

panacea. Since my own work has been with the Spanish-speaking, it is perhaps somewhat risky to venture an opinion, but regarding the dialect issue, it would seem that where there is a large enough group speaking a single dialect, such as Neapolitan or Sicilian, material could be prepared for that group using comparisons between the dialect and the standard, in somewhat the same way that Paulline Baker compares Pachuco and standard Spanish.

In regard to German, we have already mentioned earlier how the First World War brought an end to their vigorous system of bilingual education. Although there are still large German-speaking enclaves, Andersson does not forecast a bright future for them, stating that it is "ironic that we spend so many thousands of dollars teaching German on the higher levels when a continuation of past language maintenance efforts on the part of the German community itself could have supplied us with a rich fund of teachers and educated speakers of German."[37]

There is not time here to discuss each ethnic group separately. Andersson's Bilingual Schooling in the United States gives a brief overview of most of them along with a comment on the status and advisability of bilingual education and ELRET activities. And in my own conclusion of this paper, I can only express again my heart-felt conviction of the need for setting up more formal channels and organizations through which ELRET issues can be aired and discussed within the educational framework. The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese has taken cognizance of the problem by devoting two sessions of its last annual meeting in December, 1970 to ELRET, and by setting up

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[37] Ibid., II, p. 126.

a committee of nine members, chaired by Bruce Gaarder, to prepare a report on teaching Spanish to ethnic speakers. In this paper I have frequently referred to a draft of this report, as yet unpublished. And TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) through its Committee on Socio-Political Concerns of Minority Groups in TESOL, has issued a position paper as yet not approved by the entire organization, which includes statements to the effect that the teaching of English should be carried out so that minority groups will not sacrifice "in the process of acquisition, at great emotional and psychological cost, their native languages and cultures." The paper further requests that the Committee be made a regular standing committee of the organization and that it have at least one annual meeting aside from the annual national meeting of TESOL.[38]

These are good beginnings, but more coordination of ELRET interested groups will be necessary. ELRET may still bring pride and power to ethnic groups who have been neglected. We are standing on the threshold of an era of unparalleled opportunities disguised as insoluble problems in which the dream of America of cultural diversity within political unity may yet be realized. Let us endeavor to exploit the possibilities fully and fairly so that all the strands in out coat of many colors will shine forth in their true brilliance.

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[38]"Position Paper by the Committee on Socio-Political Concerns of Minority Groups in TE SOL, February 1, 1970," TESOL Newsletter, IV (September/December, 1970), pp. 8-9. This paper is reproduced and slightly amended in TESOL Newsletter V (June, 1971), pp. 6-7.